

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

30 April 2008

**The Hon. D.G.E. HOOD:** I move:

That the Environment, Resources and Development Committee inquire into and report on the current and future public transport needs for South Australia, and in particular—

1. The development of an efficient and integrated public transport system incorporating all forms of public transport and necessary infrastructure improvements;
2. The needs of metropolitan and outer metropolitan regions;
3. The opportunities and impediments to increasing public transport patronage with a view to reducing greenhouse emissions and other relevant matters; and
4. An assessment and report of the feasibility and cost and benefits of the following proposals (to include the benefit to car users who remain on the road network, road crash cost savings, benefits to car drivers who shift to public transport, revenue, journey time savings, emission reductions, noise reductions, avoided car ownership)—

(a) the introduction of a high speed passenger train service between Adelaide and Angaston to service the Barossa tourist area, with a report on the feasibility of co-leasing or of purchasing the current line from Gawler to Angaston from GWA to restore rail coverage to Lyndoch, Tanunda, Nuriootpa and Angaston;

(b) the introduction of a passenger train service between Adelaide and Mount Barker via either the duplication of a broad gauge line from Belair to Mount Barker or conversion of the Belair metropolitan train line to standard gauge during scheduled re-sleeper works in such a

way that the metropolitan line can reconnect with the standard gauge ARTC line from Mount Barker to restore rail coverage to Mount Barker, Littlehampton, Balhannah, Bridgewater, Aldgate and Stirling;

(c) the re-laying of the now defunct Northfield line to include 'Park and Ride' stations at Port Wakefield Road and Main North Road, and to provide high-speed passenger rail coverage to the suburbs of Gepps Cross, Pooraka, Walkley Heights, Northfield, Gilles Plains, Ingle Farm and Valley View;

(d) the relaying of the now defunct southern suburbs line from Reynella to Huntfield Heights (known as the 'Willunga line'), with an investigation as to the feasibility of using either the old corridor from Hallett Cove station, or of alternatively linking viable portions of the old corridor to a new line extending from Tonsley station to Reynella, Woodcroft, Morphett Vale, Hackham, and Huntfield Heights (and provide new coverage to Flinders University and Medical Centre, Darlington, and O'Halloran Hill should the line extend from Tonsley station);

(e) costs and feasibility of providing high-speed rail services from Adelaide to Aldinga via a restored Willunga rail line and the feasibility of re-using the existing but defunct Willunga line bridge over the Onkaparinga River as an alternative to a new extension and new bridge from Noarlunga to restore rail coverage to Seaford and provide new coverage to Aldinga; and

(f) the re-instatement of regular regional passenger rail services, including services to Murray Bridge, Victor Harbor, Whyalla, Mount Gambier and Broken Hill;

and such report to include any other factors or recommendations that the committee deems appropriate, along with a summary of submissions provided in response to a request for community input regarding each proposal.

South Australia needs a world-class high-speed mass transit system. It needs one for the wellbeing of the families of the state, for the economy and for our environment. Family First's proposal is that the families of Adelaide, and surrounding areas, need a world-class mass transit system, as I said. We propose a cost-effective, high-speed clean rail system for Adelaide, extending into rural regional areas. The crucial part is that it will use predominately existing defunct and disused corridors, all at a cost comparable to that of building one freeway.

*The Advertiser* some months ago had a very telling article in it, and I will quote from it, because it captures a sentiment that I believe is accurate: that Adelaide must think bigger and we must have a greater appreciation of where Adelaide will be in 2020. The article states:

Adelaide tolerates anti-progress attitudes that could hold back future generations incoming SA Great Chairman, Nigel McBride, has warned. The prominent business leader and the state's next key public advocate said he would 'refuse to listen to' further self-depreciation by South Australians about the state. He urged people to stop 'sweating the small stuff' and embrace development by taking a less conservative approach to such issues as infrastructure.

He went on to say, 'It is an attitude that says we don't want another 500,000 people here because we might have to queue up for something. The missing ingredient for our state is attitude and confidence', he said. He continued, 'With the mining industry about to peak, and the benefits of the ASC shipbuilding contract to kick in, Adelaide comfortably would enter a period of economic growth. We are a globally competitive city, but there is an inherent

conservative culture, which means that the government has to be conservative in its decision making.'

He is referring to governments of either colour. South Australia needs to think big again. That is the sort of sentiment that this motion seeks to put in place in seeking an inquiry into how we move about our capital and, indeed, our state.

This motion expands on the one proposed by the member for Schubert in the other place, whom I commend on the motion. I acknowledge the truth of what members said on his motion on 2 April, and I advise that the Environment, Resources and Development Committee is now already committed to some form of inquiry into public transport. That motion was carried with support from both major parties, to their credit.

It is an absolute tragedy that in the 1950s we had a metropolitan and regional rail system in many ways superior to the one that we have today. It is a tragedy to see disused or dismantled railway tracks running right alongside our clogged roads as we now inch ourselves along to work each day.

The Torrens Transport CEO recently complained in the press that it was now taking its buses some 30 minutes to travel from West Terrace to East Terrace during the evening peak hour. It is also tragedy that we have disused and dismantled mass-transit infrastructure in this state at a time when people can barely afford petrol any more. What use are more roads when no-one can afford to drive on them? I was profoundly disappointed to note one website describing Adelaide as follows:

Adelaide has the worst metropolitan rail service in the nation and is the only major city in Australia without electric train services. In contrast to all other cities, there are no plans for any development of the services and, in fact, there are even mild threats of service reduction and route curtailment.

That is what people are saying about Adelaide's rail infrastructure on the internet.

Although the State Strategic Plan contains a target to increase public transport usage to 10 per cent of metropolitan weekday passenger vehicle kilometres—which I understand equates to doubling our public transport usage by 2018—we are frankly doing nothing, or very little, to achieve that target.

In Adelaide's relatively short history, we have opened and then subsequently closed 14 separate rail lines. The Willunga line, which we closed in 1969, had stops in Happy Valley, Reynella, Morphett Vale, Hackham, Moana and Seaford. What would we give today to still have a rail line that serviced those suburbs? The south, like the outer north, has been forgotten when it comes to infrastructure for decades. Thanks to the closing of that rail line, we are now forced to consider a new line from Noarlunga to Seaford at a cost of some \$171.9 million.

The Mount Pleasant line was closed in 1963, servicing locations like Oakbank. Wouldn't it have been nice to be able to avoid the jam of the cars going up to the Oakbank races over Easter by just jumping on a train? I could go on. The Clapham branch closed in 1917; the Henley Beach line closed in 1957; the Largs jetty branch closed; the Semaphore line closed in 1978; the Finsbury line closed in 1979; the Hendon branch closed in 1980, and on and on it goes.

What about the tragedy of the Bridgewater line closure in 1987? A federal government infrastructure project meant that this single line had to be converted to a standard gauge, which meant that our metropolitan trains, which run on broad gauge, could not operate beyond the Belair station any more.

How much would we give today for a rail service operating to the booming Mount Barker and Littlehampton subdivisions and the surrounding suburbs? The Northfield line would have a great deal of potential if it was not also closed in 1987 and then dismantled. The new Northfield sub-developments would have had a fast rail service that would rival the well received service from the new Mawson Lakes station, which has been very successful.

The Penfield branch closed in 1991. The Main North branch closed in 1982. There was a St Leonard to Grange railway, and even a railway line under Parliament House and King William Street called the jubilee exhibition line, which was closed way back in 1927. For members' interest, that line went under King William Street right next parliament and terminated near the zoo at the old festival grounds. The tunnel still exists, and at one stage it was going to be made into a pedestrian subway, but, unfortunately, it was filled up during the construction of the Festival Theatre presumably to substantiate the foundations.

Adelaide also had something like 27 separate tramways going as far out as Paradise, Glen Osmond, Magill and Burnside, not to mention the whole of the CBD. We are only now starting to re-lay some of the old tracks that were once pulled up down King William Street. Unfortunately, trams themselves are probably not the answer, although they are partially the answer. The Flexity Classic trams, most recently purchased, can be cramped and slow. There certainly seem to be problems with the airconditioning, and the tram lines in place share the road with cars, which makes them dependent on traffic conditions and traffic lights, of course.

For heavy high-speed rail users dedicated corridors would make them independent of road congestion. However, we are still cutting back on our already limited rail services. Greenfield station on the Gawler line has just lost 10 services a day. Dry Creek has just lost five trains a day. A number of stations have also been closed on the Belair line, including Millswood and Clapham.

Across the world, and indeed across our country, cities that have kept or rebuilt their railways, such as Melbourne and Sydney, as Australian examples, have kept a genuine alternative to family car use. They are popular and getting more so as the cost of fuel skyrockets, and people cannot find parks in our increasingly congested cities. People who are concerned about the environment quite rightly advocate for the much cleaner and greener public transport alternative, as does Family First.

Setting emissions targets is one thing, but if we do nothing to get cars off the roads then those targets will be difficult if not impossible to achieve. Fast and efficient public transport networks are seeing a resurgence across Australia, and indeed across the world. Melbourne is seeing a resurgence, and is a good example. It has invested heavily in public transport, like its city loop recently, at the same time as Adelaide was pulling up its rail lines. They are now reporting 189.4 million passenger rail trips per year, an incredible jump to a level not seen since the 1950s.

Since 2001 the number of trains considered overcrowded has increased by an incredible 700 per cent in Victoria. That is a short-term problem but in the long-term it is a good thing. The Victorian public transport minister, Lynne Kosky—and I note that they have a Minister for Public Transport, which we do not—a few weeks ago had to respond by adding 200 new train services each week just to cope with the demand.

China, of course, has spent a staggering \$100 billion on its railways in the past few years. In contrast, since 1990 Adelaide has somewhere in the region of a constant 7 to 8 million trips by rail per year. Perth had a similar patronage back in 1990, but, unlike Adelaide, they invested in infrastructure, including electrification and spur lines to well-populated suburbs, and increased their patronage from 7 million—about the level of Adelaide—to some 30 million trips per year in only a seven-year period. A lot can be learned from the Perth experience.

I believe that if the infrastructure existed in Adelaide the uptake here would be comparable. People do want fast, clean and cheap transport to and from work, school and other social activities. In short, if you build it they will come.

In Adelaide the extra demand for our new tram service to North Terrace has stretched the infrastructure to breaking point. People cannot get on the tram—and, by the way, are not even able to validate their tickets if they can squeeze on in some cases—after about the Glandore station during morning rush-hour. I have personal experience of this.

Problems stemming from a poor choice of tram have masked what is a tremendously popular service. The idea is right but the implementation may not be so right. The new Mawson Lakes rail service is also tremendously popular, and I think that offers proof of the success of investing in rail infrastructure.

The state of our roads is one reason why public transportation would be so popular, but the solution is not simply building more and more roads.

A recent *Sunday Mail* article had the story of a reporter who accompanied bus driver Barry Forrestal on the 273 route from Adelaide to Paradise. He started driving some eight years ago with Torrens Transport, and he says that traffic is, in his words, 'very much worse' now. He also made the observation that there was often one person per car clogging up the roads.

Petrol prices are also escalating at an alarming rate, and the forecast is that they will continue to do so. Members may be surprised to hear that 10 years ago crude oil was only \$10 a barrel, which seems laughingly cheap now. Last week crude oil hit an all-time high of \$119.48 a barrel, a jump of almost \$20 a barrel since January alone.

OPEC's president announced on Monday that prices could foreseeably rise to \$200 a barrel within two to three years. This is because demand for oil across the world is frantic at a time when production of oil is no longer increasing to keep pace. Car sales in Russia, for example, were up 60 per cent last year, 30 per cent in Brazil and 20 per cent in China (a population of 1.3 billion people). Further, the \$2,500 Indian Tata car was recently launched, allowing literally millions of Indians to own and drive a car for the first time and, of course, consume more of the world's oil.

In Australia petrol prices are now, for the first time, above \$1.50 per litre, and this is at a time when the Australian dollar is still remarkably high. How will we cope when the Australian dollar falls? When the Australian dollar falls you will see petrol become more expensive at the pump, of course. How will South

Australians cope with petrol at \$3, \$4 or even \$5 per litre? How will our economy continue to operate at its current rate if that happens?

Monday's *Advertiser* warned of even higher petrol prices as emissions trading schemes start to kick in. The study reported talked about an extra cost of some \$1,300 per year for families in outer metropolitan suburbs.

Unfortunately, the people in some of our more disadvantaged outer metropolitan suburbs are both the biggest losers when it comes to higher fuel costs, and at the same time the least able to afford those sorts of price increases.

We are not doing anything about petrol availability and price at the moment but I, for one, do not want to be asked in 10 years what I did about this problem or what I had to say about it and have no answer. With a 38 per cent excise tax on every litre of petrol, it is a further impost to families.

Right now our focus should be on building real public transport infrastructure in this small window of opportunity we have before petrol prices and environmental concerns become overwhelming for the families of South Australia, if they are not already. The environmental benefits alone are worth it. Our calculations put the greenhouse gas emissions saved from a revitalised high-speed rail system in Adelaide at approximately 200,000 to 300,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.

At a local level, using data from the proposed Seaford extension, pollution in the form of particles, nitrous oxides, non-volatile hydrocarbons and carbon monoxide will also be reduced, with added health benefits for those living in the transport corridor. Pollution would be even less if the system were to be electrified, which is something that must happen at some point in time. I remind members that, of all Australian capitals, Adelaide alone is still running the noisier, slower, more polluting diesel trains. I commend the Liberal Party for being proponents of rail electrification.

In summing up, I would now like to look at the specific lines. The first one is the Barossa line. Moving on to the specific proposals, I think the member for

Schubert put the case well for the Gawler line again extending to the Barossa Valley in his original motion. The broad gauge line already goes there. In fact, apart from some track maintenance there would be nothing physically stopping TransAdelaide today from turning off at Gawler and ending up at Angaston.

An agreement on paper is the only substantial thing that stands in its way, because that line has now been sold off to the GWA rail company. On that point, it is surprising that such a valuable piece of state rail infrastructure was sold to a private overseas-based company. It has resulted in incredible headaches for companies like the Barossa Tourist Train that want to run a limited passenger service to the region.

The South Australian Tourism Commission desperately wants a rail line to the Barossa Valley. It has pleaded for a passenger train to the area for some time. It wants it because the Barossa Valley is perhaps our premier tourist attraction in South Australia and we have virtually no public transport to it, which is quite incredible. How many major tourist attractions around the world would have little or, in fact, no public transport available?

A 90-minute or less rail service to the Barossa would do wonderful things for the region's tourism, and yet today the line remains restricted to freight. I have an email from the Barossa Valley Information Centre, which states:

We have so many inquiries regarding train travel into the region from visitors...and I am aware of many locals who drive into or drive to Gawler to catch the train daily.

The member for Schubert, who now finds himself having to take a train to the city, described recently seeing dozens of commuters getting off at the Gawler station to drive the rest of the way to the Barossa, so this is something which is needed for tourists and people living in the area. Over the past two years, visitors to and residents of the Barossa have signed over 5,800 petitions for a return of rail services to the area. That is a large number of submissions and,

in my opinion, makes the submission worthy of investigation by the committee.

I know that the government has looked at this proposal in the past, and I am aware that a report was prepared approximately three years ago but never released. I call on the government to release that report so that the residents and tourists to the Barossa know where they stand and whether or not they are likely to have rail services restored any time soon.

It is also important that the government decides very quickly what to do with the old Barossa line. I understand that Angaston Subaru has expressed an interest in putting a shed at the old station and there are, apparently, surveyor's pegs already dotted around the line as we speak.

Turning to Mount Barker and the Bridgewater line (now called the Belair line because it no longer goes to Bridgewater, of course), it was opened back in 1883. It is not an ideal route because it winds its way through the hills around Blackwood. The line has double track to Keswick and then crossing loops to Goodwood, Mitcham, Sleeps Hill and Blackwood. Trains are frequently delayed on the track because not enough crossing loops are provided on the route.

In the past, there were two tracks to Belair. However, in 1995 one of those tracks was converted from Adelaide's broad gauge to standard so that we could have one standard national gauge line fitted from Adelaide to Melbourne, allowing the Overland to travel three times each week and several interstate freight trains. At the same time, the stations at Millswood, Hawthorn and Clapham were closed—tragically.

Although the route it is not completed directly to the city, buses from Mount Barker, like the 840 to Adelaide, now already take over an hour and the buses are cramped and often get stuck in traffic. According to a 1984 timetable I have for the Bridgewater line, there were services reaching Bridgewater from Adelaide in under 50 minutes. This is before the closure of the three stations and, taking electrification and concrete sleepers into account, a train could

reach Mount Barker within a comparable time frame; certainly less than an hour and without the same threat of traffic jams, the use of petrol, and the general stress for people who are driving.

The difficulty with restoring services to Mount Barker is that beyond Belair we now have only a standard gauge line. To reinstate services there are only two options: there is one broad gauge and one standard gauge line to Belair, with only a single standard gauge line extension to Mount Barker and on to Melbourne. The cheapest option, in the short term, would be to convert the second line from Adelaide to Belair from broad to standard gauge during the concrete re-sleepering, which should occur next year, so that there are two standard gauge lines.

The sleepers are already designed to allow either standard gauge line, and conversion during re-sleepering would be the most cost-effective time to change the gauge. As I said, this is happening next year, anyway. We would then have a consistent standard gauge line from Adelaide to Mount Barker with high-quality concrete sleepers, which has already been budgeted for, allowing higher operating speeds.

There are two downsides to this option: first, the standard gauge line from Adelaide to Mount Barker is owned and operated by ARTC and agreement would have to be reached with it for use of the single line from Belair to Mount Barker; secondly, TransAdelaide's rolling stock is all considered for broad gauge use and, if some were converted to standard gauge, it would not be able to operate on other lines in the network.

The other and more costly option in the shorter term, but not necessarily the longer term, would be for a second broad gauge line to be constructed from Belair to Mount Barker. The committee may have to examine whether or not this is feasible. This option may be more costly, but it will provide one continuous broad gauge line all the way to Victor Harbor.

The Northfield line was a spur of the Gawler train line, branching off just north of the Dry Creek station near Grand Junction Road. It crossed Port Wakefield

Road and Main North Road and then crossed through Pooraka, at the rear of the Yatala Labour Prison. It existed for about 130 years of Adelaide's history, from 1857 until the last passenger service ran on 24 July 1987. It was still used for some freight until, unfortunately, it was ripped up about 10 years ago.

In much the same way as the Willunga line was ripped up shortly before housing developments were founded along its route, we are now in the process of developing the Northfield area as a major housing development and, yet, the train line is gone. The line would have serviced well established suburbs like Pooraka, Northfield and Walkleys Heights and could have been extended to Valley View relatively easily.

These are all public transport black spots in between areas serviced by the Gawler train line and the O-Bahn which at the moment have little access to public transport. I understand that the whole Northfield corridor remains intact apart from one temporary worker's shed over a small part of the old line. Relaying a section of track should be reconsidered. Large Park'n'Ride stations could be set up on vacant land where the track crosses Port Wakefield and Main North roads, and possibly also Briens Road.

I can imagine that people living north of the line would welcome the opportunity to get out of their cars before they hit the city rush-hour traffic and take the last part of the trip by train, and also save on petrol and parking costs. We could even place large electric signs on the road, advising drivers how long it will be until the next train, and encouraging them to park their cars and finish the journey by rail. That is a proposal that I will put to the committee.

Looking at the Willunga line—the old southern suburbs service—my 1955 timetable of this service had trains leaving Adelaide going to Willunga four times a day, winding through what was then the sparsely populated southern suburbs of Papta (now called Sheidow Park), Happy Valley, Reynella, Morphett Vale, Hackham, Noarlunga and Seaford, and then through McLaren Vale and, ultimately, Willunga.

The main aim in those days was to get a train to Willunga, but the aim today would be to get a train from the densely populated southern suburbs into and out of the city. The story of this line is nothing short of a tragedy. Just as the outer southern suburbs were springing up in 1969 and becoming more and more populated, ironically, the line was closed. Then, rather than keeping the infrastructure in place, the line was completely pulled up just a few years later in 1972. The only good news about this line is that the corridor is still reasonably intact, apart from a recent decision by Marion council to put a connector road on the old corridor between Hallett Cove and Sheidow Park. Most of the old line is now used as a pedestrian and bike trail, the so-called Coast to Vines Trail.

One problem with the Willunga line is that it is not direct and that there is a sharp detour to the west at O'Halloran Hill, connecting to Hallett Cove. Given the construction in that area of the connector road, another often discussed proposal has been to extend the line straight down the hill parallel to the Southern Expressway and past Darlington and Flinders University and the hospital, linking up with the Tonsley line. A Park'n'Ride station could be set up opposite the Flinders Medical Centre and a passenger bridge could connect the station with the hospital and the university. I am sure that would be a welcome addition for southern suburbs residents and people working and living in the area.

Without Mitsubishi the Tonsley line is at risk of being yet another one declared as unnecessary. This proposal would see it again serving a major purpose for the state and providing a direct, fast rail line to the neglected outer southern suburbs via the old corridor. Many of the bridges of the old corridor still exist, although some have been filled with rubble. The line may have to be straightened and the incline reduced in some areas. However, a bridge from this line extends over the Onkaparinga River, and I am informed that there is nothing structurally unsound with the bridge; it is the second bridge to be constructed over the river.

The first bridge lattice girder (built in 1914) had three spans each of 70 feet. For some reason there were problems with that bridge. The current bridge

(built in 1930) was made to last with riveted plate-girder construction founded on concrete abutment piers driven deep into the bedrock—and it is still there. I am told that it is structurally very sound but that it needs a coat of paint and some water pipes (which recently have been put over the bridge) removed.

If that bridge can still be used—and, of course, it would need to be confirmed by engineers, but anecdotal reports from people in the industry suggest it could be—we have made an immediate saving of \$38.5 million for the construction of the new bridge and \$13.2 million in grade separation for the proposed new bridge. All this can be put towards building the new section of line from Tonsley station to the old corridor—and it would go a substantial way towards paying for it.

A fast train service from these areas might even see duplication of the Southern Expressway unnecessary in the future. Of course, that would need to be debated, but it would certainly relieve pressure on the road, anyway. At the very least it should enable the Southern Expressway to become bidirectional during off-peak periods, such as in the middle of the day, during the night and at weekends. Currently, even during quiet times of the day, the entire road allows traffic only in one direction which, while it is useful to have that service, is certainly annoying at times to residents of the south.

The reinstatement of regional services should also be considered. In years gone by it was possible to take rail to most regional towns in the state. Now commuters have to deal with trucks and drink drivers on the roads if they want to venture outside the metropolitan area. Sadly, large numbers of our young regional men and women are killed on the roads each year. I am sure that many families in the bush and well-established country towns would welcome a fast, efficient rail service into the city.

It is very disappointing that Australian National has worked over the decades to purposely degrade regional rail transportation. When reading a rail magazine recently I noted a complaint from someone intimate to the decisions of the AN board. The article states:

The AN board was not happy about the positive performance of the passenger business. The board's aim was to get rid of the business at any cost and for political reasons it was considered that the electorate would oppose the sale of a profitable government-owned business. The aim therefore was to make the passenger business appear unfavourable and to be making a substantial loss. When an advertising campaign was launched over the Christmas period, Chris was called in to explain why the business was being advertised. The board made it clear that there was not to be any advertising of the AN passenger trains.

In essence, and despite the fact that the regional passenger services were performing well, there was to be no advertising of them and the aim was to make them appear unprofitable. That sort of decision making is very hard to understand, indeed.

I believe that there is substantial popular demand for a rail service to our regional towns, including Murray Bridge, Mount Barker, Whyalla and Mount Gambier and extending to Broken Hill. Currently, the entire railway line from Mount Barker to Victor Harbor is being maintained by a band of SteamRanger volunteers. They are poorly funded and require more assistance. They run a limited tourist train service between those towns, but I understand that the trains are not operational at present for funding reasons.

What they run could not be categorised as a passenger service. Given the costs and limited timetable involved, it is mostly a tourist service.

Nevertheless, they should be commended for the terrific work they do, and I thank them for information provided to us in support of this motion. I can advise that the SteamRanger volunteers to whom I have spoken are very much in support of services returning—at least to the Mount Barker station. Some of our other railways have been handed over to volunteers, as well, including the very famous Pichi Richi railway which runs from Port Augusta to Quorn—a railway on which I myself have travelled. Again, the people responsible are doing an excellent job.

As I have already said, if a broad gauge line could run to Mount Barker then we would have a connecting rail line all the way from Adelaide to Victor Harbor, also servicing Strathalbyn and Goolwa. Alternatively, if we were to convert the second Belair line to standard gauge then passengers would need to change trains at Mount Barker but the same would be achieved. Indeed, I have a timetable from 1955 which shows that a 320 train went from Victor Harbor to Adelaide with a 325 going in the opposite direction. There was another train—the 807—which returned to Victor Harbor each night.

The Victor Harbor Road is notoriously dangerous. I think a lot of South Australians would take up the option of a safer, more relaxing scenic trip to Victor Harbor if the opportunity was there. The trip on the old 1955 train took several hours, but from a road safety point of view I think many parents would like the option of sending their teenagers to Schoolies Week by train rather than in the back of a mate's car. Of course, modern trains would be much quicker and comparable to, if not quicker than, driving a car.

The report into the Seaford rail extension talks about \$25 million in savings from reduced road crashes if that line proceeded. The report then adds that cold number into the cost/benefit analysis before deciding to put the Seaford extension on ice. But good government should not be about numbers and a balance sheet all the time. The \$25 million worth of road crash savings equates to real people who could be saved from death and injury on our roads through the implementation of a safe mass transport system, even for a limited extension to Aldinga.

There was a good opinion piece in *The Advertiser* on Monday. It talks about our road toll which, unfortunately, rose from 117 in 2006 to 125 last year. I ask: what better way to reduce the road toll than to get people off the roads onto comparatively safe, clean, efficient and cheap public transport?

I encourage the committee to speak to the residents of some of our larger rural towns and simply ask them whether they want a rail service from their town to Adelaide. They may not be surprised, but I think they will hear very positive responses to that question—certainly for return services to regional

cities in our state. Many people in more distant country towns can no longer afford to drive to Adelaide, especially the elderly who might find it difficult to drive.

I think the committee will get the same answer if it asks tourists and constituents from the Barossa Valley, Mount Barker, the southern suburbs and the newer developments at Northfield. I have very little doubt that the resounding answer to the question would be yes, whoever is asked.

I believe that Adelaide needs a fast, environmentally clean and cheap mass transport system. The Family First proposal has outlined some avenues of inquiry for providing such a system in a cost-effective way to government. I commend the motion to members.